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Past and Future

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Past and Future

Magdalena Cortez

Faith, I'm not too sure what it means to me. When I hear the word, religion pops into my mind. I don't go to church. I consider myself Catholic, but I do not support everything that falls under Catholicism. I believe in Dios y en La Virgen de Guadalupe. But if we are just talking about faith I guess I believe that everything happens for a reason. Sometimes it's hard to accept that, but I think in time it begins to make sense. For some mysterious or unexplainable (at times) reason, things happen to us. We may lose a loved one, we may come across people that we would have never imagined. People who we find interesting, people that frustrate us, that challenge us, people that motivate us and want to make us become a better person for ourselves. Perhaps we may find ourselves in a difficult or unbearable situation that to us may seem like the end of the world, but in the end it happened to us. Why? We may not always know. But I believe that those things happen to us because they need to.

Some things are unavoidable, they may simply be out of our control. However, they do happen. They happen to teach us a lesson, to motivate us, to question ourselves, and/or to help us completely evaluate ourselves and perhaps change entirely. I'm not sure. Faith is something that people believe in. It's whatever people want it to be.

Not sure where I am going with this. My parents' divorce comes to mind. What happened when I was 15 comes to mind. Were these things always in my path? I don't know. Perhaps. What I do know, is that I am extremely grateful to be where I am today. I can't live in my past, I can only move forward and use my past experiences to guide me in what the future holds for me.

Reflection

As these prompts were assigned in class, I couldn't help but to begin writing before she even finished talking. The fact that we would get time in class to write about ourselves was incredible. There are very few instructors that give students time to reflect on their life experiences and get them down on paper. Perhaps it has to do with the short amount of time they have to teach us all the information they need to. Or perhaps they just don't care. Whatever the reason may be, as a result of writing, I was able to discover some profound things about myself and my peers.

When we were told to write about a time that we had experienced or witnessed an injustice and did not have the language to speak up, one memory quickly came to mind. It was definitely not easy going back to that time in my life. I had learned to block it out of my mind and I never thought I would have to talk about it again.

As soon as I began writing in class that day I noticed a shift in my body. I could feel the tears gathering in my eyes. I could feel my pen moving faster and faster, my handwriting becoming less and less legible to read. It's as if I was waiting for this moment all along. During class the students are asked, "Who would like to share?" I love sharing and hearing other students' experiences. This time I did not raise my hand. I simply looked down at my paper and just listened to everyone else who raised their hands to share.

As soon as that class was over I usually meet up with my best friend. That day I couldn't have been happier to see her. I spoke with her about my prompt and she listened. She was one of the two people I had recently told. I knew she of all people, she would definitely not judge me. Being in this class was probably one of the best things that could have happened to me at HSU. I met some incredible people, learned some really intimate stories about my peers, and most of all learned a lot about myself as a young Chicana.

Having had the opportunity to write every day in class about myself was extremely empowering. In a way it makes me think of the movie *Freedom Writers*. All of my classmates, along with myself, each have a story to tell and what better way to tell

our stories than this. Yes, this does make us very vulnerable because it is available for the public to see, however for me, it helps me overcome some of the issues I've have had

since I was 15.